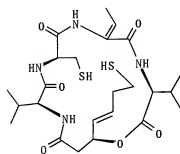


**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

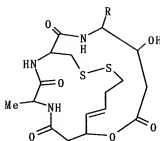
**This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:**

**LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

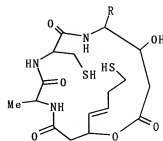
1. -15. **(canceled)**
16. **(previously presented):** A method for treating articular cartilage extracellular matrix degradation in osteoarthritis, which comprises administering a therapeutically effective amount of a histone deacetylase-inhibiting compound to a patient in need thereof.
17. **(canceled):**
18. **(currently amended):** A method for treating ~~arthrosteitis, rheumatic arthritis, or~~ osteoarthritis caused by articular cartilage extracellular matrix degradation, which comprises administering a therapeutically effective amount of a histone deacetylase-inhibiting compound to a patient in need thereof.
19. **(previously presented):** The method according to claim 18, wherein the histone deacetylase-inhibiting compound is selected from FK228, MS-27-275, Trichostatin A, NVP-LAQ824, SAHA, Apicidin, Phenylbutyrate, Valproic acid, Pivaloyloxymethyl butyrate, CI-994, Depudecin, Trapoxin, a CHAP, butyric acid and a depsipeptide compound represented by the following formula (I), a depsipeptide compound represented by the following general formula (II), and a depsipeptide compound represented by the following general formula (IIa):



(I)



(II)



(IIa)

wherein R represents an isopropyl group, a sec-butyl group, or an isobutyl group.

20. **(previously presented):** The method according to claim 19, wherein the histone deacetylase-inhibiting compound is selected from FK228, the depsipeptide compound represented by formula (I), the depsipeptide compound represented by formula (II), the depsipeptide compound represented by formula (IIa), MS-27-275, Trichostatin A, NVP-LAQ824, SAHA, Apicidin, Phenylbutyrate, and Valproic acid.

21. **(previously presented):** The method according to claim 18, wherein the histone deacetylase-inhibiting compound is a compound whose histone deacetylase inhibitory activity ( $IC_{50}$  value) is a concentration of 100  $\mu$ M or less measured by a histone deacetylase inhibition assay comprising:

- (a) pre-incubating the histone deacetylase-inhibiting compound with [ $^3$ H] acetyl-histones in a solution containing PTT for 1 hour at room temperature,
- (b) adding histone deacetylase to the solution of step (a) and incubating at room temperature for 2 hours, and
- (c) measuring the released [ $^3$ H].